

## UN fails to find proof of Iraqi incursion

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 5: UN military observers were unable to verify Kuwait's claim of a major Iraqi military incursion last week onto a Kuwaiti island in the Gulf, a UN report said Wednesday, reports AP.

Kuwait lodged a protest against Iraq with the Security Council after repulsing what it said was an Iraqi attempt to land on its territorial island. Iraq denied that it's a soldier had invaded Kuwait's islands.

Kuwait accused Iraq of violating the Gulf war cease-fire and sought unspecified action against Baghdad. The Council took no action pending a report on the incident by UN military observers.

The report of the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) confirmed that on August 28, four Kuwait Coast Guard boats seized 11 Iraqi fishing boats.

## Lankan troops smash through Tamil guerilla defences

COLOMBO, Sept 5: Hundreds of heavily armed soldiers backed by air cover and curfews smashed through Tamil guerilla defences in eastern Sri Lanka today, leaving nearly 250 people dead in combat, the military said, reports AFP.

A major air and ground offensive against the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was under way in the jungle-clad Mullaitivu region, where 226 rebels and 13 soldiers have died since Monday, a military spokesman said.

Colonel Sarath Munasinghe told reporters here the main focus of the entire armed forces was now on LTTE positions in Mullaitivu, one of the main transit points for the militants in their weapons smuggling operations.

"We started the offensive a week ago and we have reliable reports that 226 Tigers have been killed by us. We lost 13 soldiers dead and 42 wounded as of Wednesday, Munasinghe said.

He said the security forces advanced towards LTTE positions in the first four days without any resistance from the guerillas. They also did not face enemy mines or ambushes in the initial stage of the operation.

Helicopters and small fixed-wing aircraft are being used round the clock to pound LTTE hideouts and provide cover to advancing ground troops.

Munasinghe said he could not give the exact location of the operations and the nature

of fighting because the battles were still raging. The Air Force is with us 24 hours a day. It is one of the biggest battles.

The coastal Mullaitivu district is now under an indefinite curfew and parts of neighbouring Vavuniya and Jaffna districts have been placed under curfew to prevent guerillas receiving reinforcements and supplies.

Travellers from the north have said they noticed intense air activity from the air base in Anuradhapura, southwest of Mullaitivu, in the past week. Guerillas had also been moving to the battle zone, they said.

The nature of the operation is such we cannot give you any further details because it will only be helping the enemy and jeopardizing the lives of our soldiers on the ground,

Munasinghe said.

The military had carried out a similar operation to lift an LTTE siege on a key army camp elsewhere in the north at heavy cost to itself and the LTTE.

Government losses in that operation which ended last month were put at 186 dead while the military claimed killing more than 2,000 guerillas. The LTTE's estimates are not known.

The guerillas are fighting to establish a separate state for Sri Lanka's two million Tamil minority concentrated in the island's northeast.

Over 10,000 people have died in bitter combat since June last year when 14 months of peace talks between the LTTE and Colombo collapsed.

## Colombo to hold SAARC confce despite turmoil

COLOMBO, Sept 5: A South Asian head of states summit scheduled here in November will go ahead despite the current political uncertainty in Sri Lanka, a senior minister announced today, reports AFP.

Cabinet spokesman and Industries Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said the seven nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) conference will be held as planned from November 7 to 9.

The necessary money for holding the summit has already been voted and the suspension of parliament for a month till September 24 will not in any way affect the conference, Wickremesinghe said.

Crisis-hit President Ranasinghe Premadasa suspended parliament to give himself time to win over dissident lawmakers from his own party before an unprecedented resolution to impeach him is taken up by the House.

## Gorbachev removes guards from KGB control

MOSCOW, Sept 5: Taking heed of betrayals during last month's failed coup, Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin are removing their personal guard services from KGB control and putting them under direct presidential orders.

Gorbachev's security unit briefly turned against him during the August 18-21 coup, when guards prevented him and his family from straying far from their Black Sea vacation home while conspirators took control in Moscow.

The guards privately declared their loyalty to Gorbachev but continued to follow orders of their immediate bosses: the KGB guard service once known as the Ninth Directorate.

Within days other commanders in the guard service were arrested and their offices searched.

Taking a lesson from the putsch, and from foreign countries like the United States which makes its secret service accountable only to the President, Gorbachev has appointed a new guard chief, Col Vladimir Redkoborodov, who plans to break from the KGB, the news agency Tass reported Wednesday.

Redkoborodov, a 30-year KGB veteran who most recently worked in "external intelligence," said he would maintain a strict training regimen and exclude any influence by the Communist Party.

## Mossad trying to destroy me: Premadasa

COLOMBO, Sept 5: Beleaguered Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa has accused Mossad, the Israeli secret service, of trying to destroy him, state media reported today, says AFP.

Premadasa, who shut down Israel's representative office here last year, hinted that Mossad was funding the campaign by ruling party rebels to impeach him, the Daily News said.

"The Mossad espionage service is now angry with me. They will spend any amount to destroy me. I know that this campaign now going on is receiving enormous funds," Premadasa told party loyalists.

The reference was made in a marathon speech Monday, reproduced in part in Wednesday's Daily News.

Party rebels, led by former minister Lalith Athulathumudali and Gamini Dissanayake, have denied receiving foreign support for their campaign.

Premadasa gave a month for the Israelis to wind up their limited presence here in April last year. Washington urged Premadasa to reconsider his decision while most Arab steps welcomed the move.

## Off the Record

### Raisa startled by self-seekers

STOCKHOLM: A new book of interviews with Raisa Gorbachev depicts a woman startled by the self-seeking which she and her husband found when they arrived in Moscow, reports AP.

Mrs Gorbachev's 200-page book "I hope" is a series of interviews she gave from December 1990 through last April. It also contains some letters. Due to be released Thursday, it is being published in English by Harper Collins and in Swedish by Forum.

Mrs. Gorbachev, 59, describes her childhood, her work as a sociology researcher and her life at the side of Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

When the interviews were conducted, Gorbachev's early reformist colleagues were warning him of dangers from conservatives he was placing in key posts. Those fears proved well-founded during last month's coup attempt.

At the time of the interviews, she predicted "difficulties will continue to arise" but appeared confident her husband would ride out the storms with the help of his associates.

Mrs. Gorbachev said Tuesday, in her first public statement since the failed coup, said she felt "bitterness and betrayal" and had suffered a sharp increase in blood pressure that left her temporarily unable to speak.

She and her husband came to Moscow from the quiet farming town of Stavropol in 1978. Gorbachev's career had advanced rapidly and he was named Secretary of the Communist Party Central Committee under Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev.

Mrs. Gorbachev said the system of privileges practiced by the party apparatchiks "was big news to me" and she was astonished by the leaders' attitude of stony-faced indifference toward the people and each other. She said they did not greet each other and feared anyone above them in the hierarchy.

Mrs. Gorbachev said the dramatic upheavals in the Soviet Union scared her.

"Nationalism and extremism have surfaced and are digging themselves like cancer into people's national consciousness," she said in the book.

### Missing missile lands in civilian area

FLORIDA: An unarmed tomahawk cruise missile missed its target during a test last week and crashed into a woods more than 100 miles (160 kilometres) away, a Pentagon spokeswoman said, reports AP.

The missile was launched Saturday from the cruiser USS San Jacinto in the Gulf of Mexico but instead of landing in Eglin Air Force Base in Florida it fell near Jackson, Alabama, spokeswoman Susan Boyd said.

It was the fourth time since the tomahawk tests at Eglin began in 1985 that a cruise missile have landed in civilian areas.

The mishaps have not resulted in injuries, but they have prompted opposition from civilians to Navy plans to test fire cruise missiles across Florida from the Atlantic to Eglin Air Force Base.

Boyd said there would be no change in those plans.

### True labour or false alarm

BOSTON: A new test can accurately reveal whether contractions during pregnancy are truly the start of labour or simply false alarms, reports AP.

If approved for routine use, the test should allow doctors to begin therapy more quickly so they can stop early labour and prevent premature births.

"It seems to be good at distinguishing between irrelevant contractions and those associated with preterm delivery" said Dr. Charles J. Lockwood, who studied the test at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York.

Its maker hopes the test will be approved by the US Food and Drug Administration some time next year and says it will cost about \$15.

In a study published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine, Lockwood reported the test to be about 80 per cent accurate.

The test was developed by Adeza Biomedical of Sunnyvale, Calif., which helped pay for the study with the American Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Foundation of the Revson Foundation.

Doctors say the test will be even more useful if it also reveals which women are at high risk of premature delivery before labour starts.

Although research on this question has not yet been published, "there is high probability that will be the case," said Dr. Andrew E. Snyet, chairman of Adeza and principal inventor of the test.

Findings ways to prevent premature birth is a major goal of medicine. It is the leading cause of infant mortality and results in 30,000 deaths annually in the United States. Survivors are at increased risk of lung disorders and cerebral palsy.

The new test checks women's vaginal secretions for a fetal protein called fibronectin. The protein is apparently released when fetal membranes are damaged.

### Anemic infants score lower

BOSTON: Youngsters who were anemic as infants score lower than usual on mental and coordination tests when they enter school, even though their iron deficiency has been corrected, according to a study, reports AP.

The research, conducted in Costa Rica, confirms other recent studies showing a link between childhood anemia and developmental problems.

Iron-deficiency anemia is extremely common, affecting an estimated one-quarter of babies of the world.

The latest work was based on 163 children who were tested for iron deficiency as infants and treated, if necessary. When checked again five years later, "children who had moderately severe iron-deficiency anemia as infants... had lower scores on tests of mental and motor functioning at school entry than the rest of the children."

The study was directed by Dr. Betsy Lozoff of Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital in Cleveland and published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine.

Even though the research suggests a link, it does not prove that the youngster's slow development was caused by lack of iron. The anemic babies tended to be smaller at birth, were weaned from breast-feeding earlier and came from less stimulating home environments.

These and other factors, such as additional nutritional deficiencies, could have played a part in their poor test results.

Nevertheless, the researchers said that iron deficiency in infancy "may serve as a convenient marker" for other harder to identify problems that contribute to lagging development.

## US team calls off visit to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Sept 5: An official US delegation has called off a planned visit to Pakistan and India because of recent developments in the Soviet Union, official sources here said today, reports AFP.

Reginald Bartholomew, Under-Secretary of State for International Security, was to arrive here on September 14 for talks on improving bilateral relations hurt over Islamabad's controversial nuclear programme.

The US official was to visit India also to press the two countries to open their nuclear installations for international inspection, press reports said.

The official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said Bartholomew has put off his visit to both India and Pakistan due to developments in

Moscow following last month's abortive coup against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

US Secretary of State James Baker, currently "busy" with the Soviet developments, is to undertake a visit to Moscow. "Consequently Bartholomew is preoccupied with Baker's Moscow engagement," APP said quoting informed sources.

It said a fresh date of the US delegation's visit would be announced later.

The talks were planned after a high-level Pakistani delegation led by Senate Chairman Washim Sajjad visited Washington in June to explain Islamabad's stand on the nuclear issue.

The United States suspended Pakistan's half a billion dollar annual military and economic assistance in October.

## BRIEFLY

### 35 nations appeal to end fighting in Ylavia:

The 35 nations of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe appealed urgently Wednesday for an end to fighting in Yugoslavia and agreed to ban all arms end military shipments to the belligerents for the duration of the conflict, reports AFP from Prague.

The CSCE called for all military operations to be stopped to boost the chances of success of a peace conference due to be met Saturday in the Hague as all Yugoslav parties involved in the two-month old conflict are invited to attend the meeting.

### 3 killed, 7 injured in Kabul:

Mujahideen rebels bombarded the Afghan capital of Kabul on Wednesday, killing at least three people and injuring seven, the state-run radio Kabul said, AFP from Islamabad reports.

The attack was mounted from western mountains considered a stronghold of the Mujahideen resistance opposing the Soviet-backed regime of President Najibullah.

The broadcast monitored here said the guerillas fired seven Egyptian-made Sakar rockets, hitting civilian targets. It said the attack damaged several houses in the city's residential districts.

### Baker to visit Moscow:

Secretary of State James Baker said on Wednesday he will visit Moscow next week to personally convey US support for the Soviet democratic reform movement and hopes to visit the independence-seeking Baltic states on the same trip, reports Reuter from Washington.

"We will help them (the Soviet people) move along the path of political and economic freedom," Baker said at a news conference announcing his Soviet trip, the first by a top US government leader since the bungled right-wing coup against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev two weeks.

### 18 killed in Venezuela road mishap:

Two buses racing on a highway in western Venezuela crashed into a truck, killing at least 18 people and seriously injuring 37, police said on Wednesday, reports Reuter from Caracas.

One of the buses exploded in flames when it collided with the truck, and the bus driver and an unspecified number of passengers were burned to death, according to the state news agency Venezpres.

The accident occurred shortly before midnight Tuesday in Maracaibo, an oil-producing city 435 miles (700 km) west of Caracas.

### S. African exiles will be allowed to return:

Some 40,000 South African exiles will be allowed to return home under an agreement signed Wednesday between the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the South African government, the UNHCR said in a statement, reports AFP from Geneva.

Concluded shortly after South Africa's ruling party announced a groundbreaking constitutional proposal which would enfranchise the black majority, the accord provides for an amnesty for all political offences and enables the UNHCR to represent people who are not granted amnesty.

"It is the outcome of great efforts and the beginning of an important joint effort," the UN high Commissioner, Sadako Ogata, declared.

### Indonesia next NAM chairman:

Indonesia will be the next Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Ghanaian Foreign Minister Obed Asamoah announced on Wednesday at a meeting he chaired of the movement's foreign ministers, Reuter reports from Accra.

Indonesia, a founding NAM member and favourite for the three-year post, will take over from Yugoslavia in 1992.

Nicaragua had also offered itself for the chairmanship but conference sources said the application was made under the Sandinista government and Managua's current administration was less interested in the post.

Islamic University in Gaza to reopen:

The Islamic University in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip was authorized Wednesday to reopen after being shut since the Palestinian uprising began four years ago, a Defense Ministry spokesman said, AFP from Tel Aviv reports.

Defense Minister Hoshie Arens, who issued the authorization, did not mention a date for the resumption of classes at this university, which is the biggest in Gaza with 4,500 students, the spokesman said.

"This decision reflects Israel's readiness to allow a return to normal of the Palestinian population's daily life," Arens said in a statement.

## Kashmir militants kidnap former Indian minister

SRINAGAR, Sept 5: A pro-Pakistan Muslim separatist group claimed responsibility today for the abduction of a former tourism minister in the Indian state of Kashmir, reports AFP.

A spokesman for Hizbullah said by telephone that overnight Wednesday its armed militants seized Khemlata Wakhloo, 55, and her husband from their residence in this Writer capital of Kashmir.

The spokesman did not list any conditions for the couple's release, but warned that they would be killed if the government launched "any crack-down" to trace the two.

Khemlata, a Hindu, was a minister in the Kashmir Ministry of C.M. Shah, a Muslim, in 1984-86. Her husband, O.N. Wakhloo, is a

former principal of the regional engineering college here.

Official sources earlier said the couple was taken away by five gunmen who used leaders to scale the wall of their house in the area of Gagribal. The guerillas met no resistance from policemen posted there.

Wakhloos' neighbours said they heard three bursts of gun shots at around 9 pm (1530 GMT). It was not clear who had fired.

The Hizbullah is a small group fighting for the secession of Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state. Pakistan disputes the ownership of Kashmir and the two countries have gone to war twice over the province.

Police sources said the abductions might be linked to the arrest about a month ago of

Mushtaq ul Islam, a former chief of Hizbullah, which is now led by Shahid ul Islam, a law graduate.

The Hizbullah was blamed for the assassination last year of a prominent Muslim politician, Maulvi Masoodi. But it is not known to have reported to any kidnapping until now.

Also late Wednesday, a group of gunmen believed to be Muslim militants abducted Vijay Kumar, a Hindu and director of another engineering college here, from his office at gunpoint, police said.

No one has claimed responsibility for Kumar's abduction.

Muslim militants in Kashmir have frequently used kidnappings as a bid to force the government to release their colleagues from prison.

## Serbian guerillas attack Croatian towns

BELGRADE, Sept 5: Serbian guerillas launched mortar attacks on several Croatian towns overnight in a fresh outbreak of fighting in the break-away Yugoslav republic, Croatian Radio said today, reports Reuter.

More than 1,500 Serbs and many Muslims were also reported to have fled a region with a mixed ethnic population in the neighbouring republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina after two Muslims were killed there, raising fears that the violence will spread.

Fighting continued in eastern Croatia one day after Serbian guerillas and the Serbian-led Yugoslav army cut off the eastern Croatian region

of Slavonia on Wednesday by blocking the last open road into the area.

### Gaddafi greets Baltic states

NICOSIA, Sept 5: Libyan leader colonel Muammer Gaddafi on Wednesday congratulated the Baltic republics on their declarations of independence but did not say whether Libya would recognise the three states, reports AFP.

The official Libyan news agency JANA, in a report monitored here, quoted Gaddafi as saying: "We offer our sincerest congratulations and salute your proclamation of independence."

Zagreb radio said Osijek, the capital of Slavonia, came under mortar attack several times during the night and local people spent the night in air-raid shelters. Public transport was at a standstill.

Firing was heard in the towns of Vukovar, Gospić, Nova Gradiska and Savaški Bok, the radio said, but did not report any further deaths.

Almost 400 people have been killed in Croatia and neighbouring Slovenia since the two republics declared independence on June 25.

Many of Croatia's 600,000-strong Serbian minority oppose the independence moves and want to stay part of Yugoslavia.

## Saudi Arabia sends Pakistan Gulf war booty

MANAMA, Sept 5: Saudi Arabia has sent four shipments of Iraqi tanks captured in the Gulf war to Pakistan but they are badly damaged and "healths of junk" shipping sources said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

The sources, who asked not to be named said freighters began collecting mangled Soviet made T-55 and T-62 tanks all captured in Kuwait in the Saudi port of Dammam two months ago.

The fourth shipment arrived in Karachi on August 27 and there was a possibility of more being delivered, they said.

But they said it was hard to imagine what Pakistan, which looks to Saudi Arabia as its main source of aid, would do

with the mangled equipment. Western diplomats said some war booty had been sent from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to Pakistan but it was destined for Afghan guerillas fighting the Soviet-backed government in Kabul.

"We understand there have been four shipments of mainly T-55 and T-62 tanks but as far as we're concerned they are just a heap of junk scarp metal," one source said.

Some of them were without their guns, some had no turrets or tracks and none was mobile, he added. But they said the Pakistanis may be able to cannibalise some of them. It's our understanding they were all captured in Kuwait, he added.

A Pakistani Defence Ministry spokesman denied any tanks had arrived but dockworkers in Karachi said they had seen them unloaded day and night behind tarpaulin screens. They were moved from the port area at night.

"Yes, we have seen big tanks with long barrels, one dock worker said.

In Rotterdam shipping managers Khan Schkeepvaart confirmed the 7,168 tonne Dutch-registered freighter Fairlift carried a cargo of tanks to Karachi a few days ago but would not say how many or what type.

A Khan official said, "the only thing I can say is that it brought a number of tanks to Karachi from Saudi Arabia in

August."

Saudi officials were not available for comment and the shipping sources gave no details about the other shipments or how many tanks were involved.

In Delhi the Indian Express newspaper said the tanks were among 300 captured Iraqi T-72s - Baghdad's top of the line model in the war - and T-62s given to Pakistan by Saudi Arabia.

Iraq had some 5,500 main battle tanks at the start of the Gulf crisis including 1,000 T-62s and an estimated 500 T-72s main firepower of Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard.

Gulf-based sources declined to say whether Saudi Arabia

had sold or given the damaged tanks to Pakistan as a reward for sending troops to support the US-led coalition which drive Iraqi occupation forces from Kuwait.

Any equipment captured by the United States and supplied to Pakistan could violate a US ban on arms deliveries imposed last October because of concerns about Islamabad's nuclear weapons programme.

One Gulf shipping source said initially, we all thought this was a very sensitive matter but when we saw how badly the tanks were damaged we just laughed - they're just junk."

A spokesman for the Rotterdam-based shippers said they were Russian-made tanks

and equipment related to what you might term personnel carriers.

Less than five tanks were in complete form the rest were in pieces, it was described as steel scrap, he added.

Hundreds of Iraqi tanks and armoured vehicles were abandoned in the desert after the 100 hour Allied blitzkrieg ended the Gulf war on February 28. Reuter correspondents saw captured Iraqi tanks being moved through Kuwait on transporters after the war.

Diplomats in the Middle East say the Kuwaiti battlefields are a treasure trove for enterprising arms dealers little effort has been made to clear abandoned Iraqi armour or ordnance.